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AP English Period 5

“The Crucible” Anticipation/Reaction Guide: Part 2

1. Statement: Confessing to a crime you didn’t commit in order to avoid punishment is wise. Position: **Agree**

This statement depends very much on what situation is being presented but overall it would be smart to agree in order to save yourself from punishment. A person who might be facing a huge consequence if found guilty of a crime might lie and instead say he committed another crime to either take a smaller punishment or take no punishment at all. It is morally wrong to do because of the fact that it is lying and also might make the situation worse for another person. Back in the times of witchcraft confessing to a crime you did not commit would have probably saved your life. When witchcraft was around people would be tortured or even killed just for being accused of having anything to do with witchcraft. If you were to confess to being a witch back in the Puritan days the punishment received would have been less harsh than that of not confessing. Sometimes these people who were accused of witchcraft without any evidence were tortured or even put to tests that would ultimately kill the person if they would not confess. People would agree to this statement if they were put in a position themselves. If a person is about to face life in jail for a crime and are given the option to agree to lesser charges they did not commit in order to receive a lesser sentence they would undoubtedly accept the lesser charges. Now a days with the law system being way more advanced then it was back in the Puritan days. Accusing someone of a crime and them being punished for that crime even though they did not commit the crime is very unheard of in modern society. The person could defend themselves and proof would have to be presented that proves this person actually committed this crime. The contrary is what used to happen when a person was accused of witchcraft. If someone decided to accuse you of being a witch without having any evidence of this claim, they could do so. Many of the people who were accused of being witches in the Puritan days would have no evidence against them to support the fact they were truly witches, but they did not have any evidence to prove that they were not witches either. It was basically a no-win situation if you were accused of being a witch back in those times. People accused of being witches would just point their fingers at someone else and then that person would blame another, and so and so forth. Maybe it was not right for them to do this but it was looking at the situation in a survival of the fittest point of view. That is why it would be a wise thing to confess to a crime you did not commit in order to avoid punishment even though it might now be the right thing to do morally. Although you might not have committed any crime at all if you are in a situation where you could receive a lesser punishment or no punishment at all then you would originally it would be wise to accept that deal.

2. Statement: The difference between right and wrong is clear.

Position: **Agree**

Everyone knows the difference between what is right to do and what is wrong to do. From a very young age people are taught how to differentiate right from wrong, it is almost like common sense. We know it is wrongful to stab or shoot someone because we are told of the punishments of doing so. Every time we step into a place we know that there are specific rules or regulations that must be abided to. When you are in a place or situation you know what is wrong or right for you to do in it. Some people have different interpretations of what is right and wrong though. We all come from different cultures and are taught different aspects of life by society, parents, and religion. What someone may thing is right might be wrong for another person. Some people think that something is right for them to do as long as they are not caught, but they know it is a morally wrong thing to do. Although this might be true, people clearly know what is right and wrong to do because if it is not clear to them then they will receive consequences even if they did not know it was a wrongful thing to do. An example of this claim is if a five year old boy were to walk into a convenience store then proceed to take a candy bar and put it in his pocket and leave the store without paying there would be consequences based on his actions. The store owner might let him off with a warning due to his age but another store owner could see this as an act of theft and could ban the child from the store or even worse. If people were to walk around society without a clear sense of what is wrong and right to do then we would have chaos around us. That is one of the main reasons why laws are put in in place around society, to assure peoples safety and well-being. Another example would be a person who is poor with no money to buy food and no donations has to steal some food from a grocery store to feed his children. This person knows that stealing food is a wrongful thing to do but does it anyways because if he does not then his children might starve to death. Lawfully this act is considered the wrong thing to do and can lead to many consequences but morally this act might be justifiable. There are many things around life that people can have different opinions or outlooks on but for the most part we all share a common core of being able to differentiate what is wrong and right.

3. Statement: It is better to die for what you believe in rather than to lie to save your life.

Position: **Unsure**

This statement depends on how much the person it is asked to values their life. Would a person die for something they believe for instead of just telling a lie to save themselves? Depends on the situation this statement is put in. For example, when Patrick Henry said “give me liberty, or give me death!” did he really mean that he would sacrifice his life to achieve liberty? Maybe or maybe not. If a whole group of people around you are a hate group like the KKK and they are talking about how much they hate the blacks and how they would kill anyone who supports them and you speak out because you believe what they are preaching is wrong and you end up dying, was it really worth not lying and dying? Sure, it would be a courageous act to fight for what you believe in but if it ends up with your life being taken away was it really that worth it in the end? If you were to not stand up for what you believe in though it could just make you live a lie. There are many people in history who have not been in an agreement with the dictators that are controlling their everyday lives. Would it have been smart to lead a reform group against the dictator and be ultimately caught and persecuted? How big of a difference would your life have made if you sacrificed it for a cause like that? Many people who are living in dictatorships have to conform to their government and the dictator’s way of ruling if not they could face many consequences which could include death. These people are all living a lie but would not risk their own lives to stand up for themselves or their people. On the contrary, others might believe that dying for something they believe in rather than lying to save their life is the right thing to do. Dying for what you believe in can make a lasting effect on the earth, for example Jesus Christ. The Bible states that he went against he thought was wrong and ended up dying for what he believed in. His death motivated many others to follow his paths and can be seen as a courageous act. People who die for what they believe in can be seen as role models for others and can make others be more courageous also. If Jesus Christ would have never stood up for what he truly believed in by sacrificing his life then many of the lasting impacts he left would have never existed. His courage for dying for what he believed in was seen by many as a true sign of him being a hero and not living a lie. The statement “It is better to die for what you believe in rather than to lie and save your life” can be agreed to or disagreed to based on the situation it is applied to.

4. Statement: There is only one correct way to interpret the Bible.

Position: **Disagree**

The Bible can be interpreted in numerous ways. One person might have one way of interpreting the Bible and another could have a different way of interpreting the Bible. Does this make one of these people wrong and the other right? No. The Bible has many different chapters and verses that can be seen and interpreted differently based on who is reading it. There are many different religions across the world that use the Bible as their main sacred text but change up their views on it or have different opinions on some of its teachings. Jews and Christians for example both use the Bible as their main sacred text but decided to follow only some parts of the Bible. One might only follow the New Testament while the other might only follow the Old Testament. Either way they are interpreting the Bible in different ways and are not wrong for doing so. Another example is some Christians might see gay people as evil doers because they are not following the guidelines that the Bible set of a marriage consisting of one man and one woman. Others might be Christian also but see gay marriage as something that should be accepted because everyone was made uniquely by God and they should be accepting of that. The Bible just like any other book can have different meanings. When a passage is read from a book it could be interpreted in many different ways, just like the Bible. Who is to say that the passage is being interpreted in its correct form? It is the same thing as saying that my god is correct and your god is not. Who can tell for sure which one of us is right or wrong? The texts inside of the Bible are meant to be interpreted in different ways because not all people come from the same culture or are going to come to the same conclusion as another person might, differing opinions will arise just like for anything else in life. Varying opinions based on the Bible have caused many different wars and fights in history. Many people thought and still think that their way of interpreting the Bible is the most correct one and that is not the way to live. In life people will see that they are not always right, people have different opinions than yours, and it is best to just respect their differing opinions and continue believing yours. Just like

5. Statement: That which doesn’t destroy us makes us stronger.

Position: **Agree**

This statement is very true because it is saying how obstacles that we overcome in life can end up making us stronger and stronger. A quote that can relate to this one is “Nothing ventured, nothing gained.” because what harm can something have if it will make you better or stronger? Failing a test can actually be a beneficial thing for a student because it can push them to work even harder next time to assure they do not repeat the same mistake of not studying. Cancer is another example because a fight against cancer can be one of the toughest things a person can go through physically and mentally, which can make them a whole other person after they are through with it. These situations can be either positive or negative ones but ultimately are there as an obstacle that when overcame make the person feel changed. Some people might not agree with the situations that life puts them into but after overcoming the situation through rigorous ways then the people will see a change in themselves. Going through these tough or difficult experiences in life can shape the person we become and how we view things from that point on. If you go through something in life which makes you test some of your strengths and weaknesses it can help better yourself in many ways. For example, when you do something very often that you find to tests your endurance or mentality you will find that it makes you stronger. Many people are scared to having a needle stab then when they are being vaccinated and it feels as if it is killing them mentally but they soon gradually start to lose this dear of being stabbed by needles. Downfalls in life can help you help you become more resistant and immune to failing and can only make you stronger. A person might be teased and bullied for a while because they are fat. After having enough of being called fat the person might change their lifestyle which in turn makes them skinnier and a better person. This is an example of something negative that does not kill you bringing out a positive outcome in life which made you a stronger person at the end. The more a person is put down and made go through a though time then the more that person will be stronger the next time it happens. When a family member or friend that you were very close to dies you become devastated. After you learn the concept of death and that nothing can bring them back you become a stronger person because you know that death is just a part of life and although that person might be gone you still have to live on. This statement can be agreed to because many people know that throughout life they face problems and tests that end up making them stronger.

6. Statement: It’s more difficult to forgive yourself if the person you have hurt doesn’t forgive you.

Position: **Agree**

When you hurt another person badly to the point where they will not forgive you it is a very bad and hurtful thing. Why do you care if you forgive yourself for the hurtful things you have caused another person if that people will not forgive you themselves? You can always be forgiving to yourself but the other person might not see it that way. For example, you are drinking and driving and end up crashing and severely hurting the person you crashed into to the point where they are handicapped from that moment forward. Do you think that person will be forgiving of you when you have caused them to be disabled for the rest of their lives because you decided to commit a stupid mistake? Sure you can be punished and fined but no punishment or fine can be as bad as being in a wheelchair for the rest of your life. Both people involved in the crash would of wanted it to never have happened but what control did the poor innocent driver have over the situation? The guilt and regret of the whole thing is bad enough but knowing that the person who you have hurt will not forgive you makes it even worse. Having to live your life knowing that you have caused someone to go through something so hurtful that they will not forgive you is a hard thing. When a person forgives another for a wrongdoing they had committed it is a huge sense of relief. It is basically saying I know that you screwed up and I forgive you for having done so. It is an act that shows a brighter side to the whole situation, like a good ending to a story which was dark. Not being forgiven by someone can also be a life lesson. It can serve as a reminder to always be cautious about what you do or say to a person because that person might not agree to what you say and can be ultimately hurt by it. I know of a woman who forgave the killer of her son because she felt as time passes things need to be forgotten and forgiven of. Did he deserve to be forgiven for having taken the life of her son away? Had he forgiven himself for having killed her son? Forgiveness from another person might be the only thing stopping you from forgiving yourself.

7. Statement: Courage means doing something even though it can be difficult and fearsome.

Position: **Agree**

Courage is a very favorable thing to have. Not all people have courage and when faced with though situations they quit or cannot prevail. Courageous acts could be defined as difficult and fearsome because it takes a whole lot of determination and strength from a person to commit one. One of the biggest courageous acts a person can commit is fighting for their country in the army, navy, or air force. It is a very difficult thing to have to leave your family behind, face very tough living conditions, and even risk your life in order to protect those you care about. Not many people are willing to make those types of sacrifices because it would be too hard for them to do so. These courageous people who do sacrifice their lives to serve for their country are considered heroes in the lives of many. Courage can be shown in many different ways. For example, one might have the courage to ask a girl out to homecoming because it was a very tough thing to find the strength to do. Or even having the courage to try and change your sleeping habits. Many different things can be hard or difficult for a person to overcome. Every person has a different set of things that they find difficult or fearsome to do. Some people might find what you see to be difficult or fearsome to be easy and not courageous. People have a unique sense of courage because everyone thinks differently. For example, picking up a tarantula might be the most frightful thing a person can do but another person might think of picking up a tarantula as something which is not fearsome at all. Courage still has the same definition but people have a unique way of being courageous.

8. Statement: A person is innocent until proven guilty.

Position: **Agree**

People cannot just be charged of a crime without having any evidence to do so in modern society. When a person is accused of having committed a crime they have to go through a series of procedures before the court can find that person to be guilty. People are free to judge that person though without having to be found guilty. They just cannot say for certain that he or she is guilty without the court system proving that to be the case. Back in the Puritan days people were accused of crimes and if they were guilty or not would be tortured into saying that they did commit the crime. It was basically playing the blame game with the loser being whoever is blamed last. Evidence is a very crucial thing that is gathered and examined to make sure that the person who is being punished for a crime really did do it. If a person was accused of being a witch in the Puritan times they would not have any solid evidence to say that they were not witches and also had no evidence suggesting that they were not one either. An example of someone being rumored to be guilty without really being a hundred percent sure that they actually were was the case of Aaron Hernandez. He was a famous football player for the Patriots who was rumored to have killed a man and was facing a first-degree murder charge and many people were thinking that he was a guilty for sure. When the verdict came out it said he was not guilty of first-degree murder. Many people were shocked because they saw that all the evidence was there but they had forgotten one thing “a person is innocent until proven guilty.” People deserve to have a chance to prove their innocence because not all people are truly guilty no matter how much people claim they are. The right to prove yourself innocent was not given to people accused of being witches back in the Puritan days instead they were automatically guilty. Anyone can easily have told a lie claiming that they say this person doing this thing. The statement “You can’t just blame someone without any evidence” would have been a complete lie back in Puritan days. If a person were to say that they have suspicions about you being a devil then you can be persecuted and trailed just based off that accusation but that does not mean they are truly guilty. In Puritan days a very flawed court system was in place where accusations could be enough evidence to make someone face punishments based on the crime they were claimed to have commit. The court system currently in place is unbiased to people and do not claim that a person is guilty of a crime before having the evidence to back up that claim. To conclude, the statement “a person is innocent until proven guilty” is a very spot on way to look at any type of case or accusation. Without proper physical evidence who is to say that a person is truly innocent of the crime they committed?

9. Statement: Beliefs in opposition to common values should be illegal.

Position: **Disagree**

Having the right to have your own beliefs even if they contradict common values is a freedom that everyone should have. In some places in the world like Cuba and Korea freedom of speech is non-existent. If someone were to oppose the common values that were set up by society then they could be punished for doing so. Most places in the world let people speak their mind on various subjects without any punishment. Many people are scarred to express their opinion or opposition to something because of the problems or commotion their opinion might produce. A society where your beliefs and opinions are tainted due to society being so strict is a society where I would not want to live in. People in the United States of America for example are allowed to petition against basically anything without the petition being harmful of course. The freedom of speech is one of the rights which should be allowed to be expressed freely and without opposition. Opposition to common values is illegal in dictatorships like Cuba. If you are found to be speaking your mind about the government in a bad way then you can be jailed and prosecuted. These rules in those types of societies are put there in order to keep the inhabitants from rebelling or having their own thoughts on many subjects. Prosecuting someone just because they believe in something that goes against common values is very unfair and unjust. Imagine having to watch what you say or even have to go along with the ideas presented by society just because if you do not then you can be prosecuted. Although this was the daily life of many people in history or even currently for some peoples it is still a wrongful thing to do. What does it say about your society or people if you force them to think exactly what you think? What makes your opinion so correct that you have to enforce it onto others? People should be allowed to state their opinion on things no matter if they go against what is supposed to be believed. The people who make believing against common values illegal are basically taking away the opinion of people. How can another person tell you that your opinion on something is right or wrong? Opposing a common value is just your opinion on something which should be allowed to be expressed without any consequences. If you were to tell someone who lived in the Puritan days that there is a society or place where your beliefs can be expressed freely without any consequences they would of probably thought you were lying or crazy. Society has changed and now allows people to be free to express their personal opinion on a subject whether good or bad and not be punished for doing so. In conclusion, beliefs in opposition to common values should be legal.

10. Statement: Justice is best determined in a court of law.

Position: **Disagree**

Justice can be determined in many different ways to many different effects. Sure the court of law can sometimes be the best or most effective way to determine if someone is guilty because it bases many of the things on evidence rather than assumptions. There are other effective methods of determining justice which are outside of the court of law. For example, in the book “To Kill a Mockingbird” when Boo Radley was found guilty of a crime the people in the community thought that it would be just for him to be punished by his father and not be allowed to leave the house. This was a way in which justice was determined by the people and he was punished in a way that was found just and the people did not involve the authorities because they saw Boo Radley’s dad as a person who could find justice in the situation. There are examples that have been brought up in the media where people have been accused of a crime that they never committed. Justice can be determined in a court of law but that does not mean that it is the best or only place where justice can be determined fairly or just. People in the Puritan times could have put a person who was accused of witchcraft in a court house and find them to be guilty of a crime they did not commit which does not seem very just and justice was definitely not properly served. A court can let you give evidence as to why you are not guilty which gives you a chance to prove you are innocent therefore giving people a way to have proper justice. That still does not mean that in other times in history people in communities or small towns were given proper justice in means that did not involve the court of law or any authority. The difference between justice being determined in a court of law and justice being determined by other means is the process and consequences that are present. Court systems will most likely give a person a more just punishment for the things they do but other people might not think that this justice is correct or fair. People in a society that are punishing an individual can argue and choose between which punishment is fairer for the individual to endure. Different judges in a court of law can view situations in different ways and come up with different ways of serving justice. In conclusion, justice is not best determined in a court of law because it can be determined just as well in other different places or societies.